

Amaranth

by ObsessiveCompulsiveValkyrie

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Summary: Vampire AU. Yukimura Chizuru only wanted to pass through life without too much obstruction. Now, she finds herself caught up in a whirlwind of an adventure when she unintentionally ends a war between mythical creatures. How could she possibly go back to her old life now? HijikataxChizuru, everyone elsexOCs. Rated T for blood and language.

Amaranth

Hello, there! I'm ObsessiveCompulsiveValkyrie, or 'Valk' for short. I'm relatively new to the Hakuouki fandom, but I'm loving it so far XD It's been maybe two weeks since I started watching the show, and I've now finished all three seasons and the OVA, plus I have Warriors of the Shinsengumi coming in the mail. I'm addicted, I think.

Anyway, this is my first fic for the fandom. It's a vampire fic (No relation to that thing that starts with a T and is eight letters long), so it naturally is AU and a little OOC to adapt. I think I did all right, though XP This is a Hijikata/Chizuru, and I have OCs planned for the rest of the guys. I hope you'll like them :)

I do want to be as accurate as possible with historical facts and such, but there's only so much researching on the internet and begging I can do to get information from my friends. With that in mind, I do write the names as family name first and keep with the honorifics as they used on the show. However, since relationships are different in here, they may address each other a bit differently than you're used to :)

****DISCLAIMER:** Hakuoki is not mine. I am not making any money off of this and never will.**

Anyway, I'll shut up now and let you read. This fic is rated T for bloody gore and language. Nothing new if you watched the anime XP

* * *

><p>Amaranth
*_**Chapter I - Indebted**_**

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In the dark of night, I always felt like there was something more out there. Not that I was afraid, I just had the feeling that there was more to the darkness beyond. It fascinated me. I always liked to wander through the night without my brother knowing, hoping I could find whatever I was sure was missing.

To this day, I'm still not sure if I regret it or not.

...

"You!"

Yukimura Chizuru squawked a sound of alarm and ducked her head, fighting to hold back her tears as the '_shnk!_' of a sword slamming into the wall sounded above her. Somehow, she'd found herself caught in the middle of a battle. A battle between two very handsome men.

Whose strength was well beyond human.

They didn't fight with swords like the men of the military, nor with spears like the occasional martial artist. No, these men fought each other with raw power, moving gracefully through the air and barely touching the floor.

It was almost as if she was watching a dance, had she not been terrified for her life. She wasn't even sure how the night had ended up like this. She had slipped out of her home late at night for an evening stroll like usual, then heard a commotion and decided to explore. Soon after, she found herself in her current position, ducking low to the ground with her hands clasped over her head. A mere ten centimeters above her head, the discarded sword stuck into the wall.

These men did use swords, but they almost seemed more like accessories than anything else. What's more, no matter how many times the two men impaled each other, they didn't seem to slow down.

She had heard the husky voice of one of the men call out, but she didn't know if he was referring to her or his opponent. Who could tell?

"Move, human!"

Glancing up slightly, she saw the man with shorter hair moving to charge at her. In a blur, she felt one arm wrap around her waist, heard the sword above her come free from the wall, then someone pulled her to her feet. A warm body stood right behind her, one arm still settled around her middle, and a hand forcing the sword into hers. His—"it was definitely a man behind her"—hand shifted to grip her wrist and hold her arm steady.

An instant later, a weight slammed into the blade and a groan sounded in pain.

Forcing her eyes open, she gaped in surprise at the sight of the short-haired man stuck on the blade, impaled through his heart. His hand was pointed at her throat and, after seeing the power displayed in the way those men had fought, such a blow would surely have killed her.

The reality started to set in as she realized she was, in fact, holding the sword that killed that man. She had been framed! The man with the ponytail deliberately made her inflict the killing blow. She'd be put to death for murdering!

Her mouth fell slack in shock as her hand loosened on the blade, letting the man stumble backwards as he glanced down at the sword, then proceeded to crumble into dust.

Wait, what?

She felt her knees buckle as she started to collapse, but the strong arm around her middle kept her upright. What in the world was happening? People didn't just turn to dust when they died! People couldn't fight with strength like those two had been. They couldn't take multiple sword strikes to their bodies and keep going strong.

Just what were those people? Demons?

"You have my thanks."

She turned slightly, glancing back into a pair of calm, violet eyes hardened with warfare. She blinked a few times, not fully registering what had happened yet. Her mouth opened to form words, to ask what was going on and what he planned to do with her, but all she could manage was a sort of squeak when sentences failed to construct in her mind.

He slowly loosened his hold on her middle, shifting to bring her down to her knees gently. "I appreciate you wandering here, human."

Human? Then he truly was some kind of demon?

"Come. My coven is in your debt. We will care for you in return."

She sat on her knees, staring up into his violet eyes as if mesmerized. She couldn't begin to process what was happening. It was all so bizarre, yet this man behaved as if it was the most normal thing in the world. Maybe he really was some kind of demon.

Her breathing felt heavy as she struggled to catch her breath. Her eyes never left his as she searched for the answers to the questions she couldn't voice. She was vaguely aware of his arm still around her back, holding her upright and tightening as her eyes fluttered shut and she fell to lean against him.

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"Lord Hijikata, what are you going to do with her?"

"Hm, I wonder?" he mused, leaning to rest his chin on his knuckles. The elaborate framework of the armrest dug into his elbow, but he didn't pay it any mind as he continued to stare at the human girl sleeping peacefully in the futon before him. It was a strange turn of events that a human would show up during his fight, but convenient all the same. Finally, they were rid of that pesky fool.

The Nakahara family wasn't worth keeping around for future generations. He'd just done female purebloods a grand favor. Rather, he mused, glancing down at the brunette human girl, she had done them a favor. Nakahara Junbei had been a thorn in his side for far too long, but now it was over. No longer would hunters be hounding their territory, looking to eliminate his coven.

Closing his eyes with a silent, relieved sigh, Hijikata Toshizo wondered what the future would hold. He had meant what he'd said to this human before she'd passed out. He would provide care for her. She had saved his men, his family, from a dark fate. How, exactly, they would care for her, he wasn't sure.

But a pureblood vampire never backed down on his word.

"OtÅ•san. She's coming to."

He looked up as the man with long violet hair spoke, peering at the girl as she hummed a sound of consciousness. Slowly, she shifted to sit up in the futon and glanced around, freezing as she registered the sight of that purple-haired man seated cross-legged beside her resting place. She looked about to scream, causing him to reach out and clamp his hand over her mouth.

Hijikata shook his head at his subordinate and hummed a low, "Please, Hajime. She is our guest."

"Yes, milord," Hajime murmured, touching a finger to his lips and indicating the girl should be silent. When she nodded slowly, he drew his hand back and settled it neatly on his knee.

The girl looked around slowly, trying to find the source of the second voice that spoke. Turning, she spotted him seated in his chair easily, one leg crossed over the other and his chin settled on his knuckles. With the battle over and his ponytail removed, his long hair fell down his back and over his shoulders loosely. Seated like a king, as it should be. "Y-youâ€|"

His dark eyebrow rose ever-so-slightly as he murmured, "What's this? She speaks?"

She slowly pushed the bedcovers down and leaned slightly closer with a determined look on her face. "Justâ€| Just what _are_ you?"

Though Hijikata's face didn't show the slightest hint of amusement, he was internally chuckling to his heart's content. Shifting his hand slightly, he moved to rest his chin on his little and ring fingers while his middle and index rested against his cheek. "And what do you mean by that?"

Her fingers gripped into the covers as she retorted with as much

anger as she could muster in her terrified state, "Don't play dumb with me! I-I saw what happened! You fought and-!"

He finally let a smile crack as he glanced over at Hajime, then peered at the other three men sitting on the side of the room before turning back to her. "I am a thing of nightmares, girl. I am a pureblood vampire, and my companions are the members of my coven."

As she glanced around at the others, the one with dark brown hair, Nagakura Shinpachi, flashed a toothy grin to show his fangs. The girl's face paled as she took in the sights around her, then looked back to Hijikata. "W-why did youâ€¦ bring me here?"

"It's as I said," he murmured, his clear voice slicing through the night like a scythe through wheat. "We are in your debt and we _will_ repay what we owe."

She balked, leaning away from him in shock even though he still stood several meters away. "Iâ€¦ What? How are youâ€¦ in my debt? What did I do?" Tears flooded the corners of her eyes as she stammered, "W-waitâ€¦ when you say 'debt,' do you meanâ€¦ Are you going to kill me?"

Hijikata felt the eyes of his coven on him as he scoffed and crossed his arms. "Of course not. As a pureblood, it is I who represents this coven and protects it." Sighing, he waved a hand in dismissal before turning for the door. "I grow weary. Hajime, Sano, Shinpachi, Souji, you explain. I give you permission to tell her whatever is necessary for the situation. Do not lay a finger on the human. She is our guest."

The three men seated on the side and the one by her futon bowed simultaneously and said, "Yes, my lord."

â€¦

Chizuru stared at the retreating back of the man claiming to be a vampire. His long, jet black hair fell loosely and swayed ever-so-gently as he walked, his western-style suit falling down his thin frame neatly. Half of her wondered why he had saved her and what his plans were for her.

Another part of her wondered how such a beautiful man could exist.

Slowly, she turned to face the other four, cringing slightly as they shifted to take seats in a semicircle in front of her. The one with reddish-colored hair gave a slight dip of his chin in respect, then said, "I am Harada Sanosuke. Sano, for short. I'm a vampire in the service of Lord Hijikata."

She blinked as the one to his left, a musclehead of a man with a bright grin on his face and dark brown hair falling messily over a bandanna. "Nagakura Shinpachi. I'm a vampire, too."

The one to Shinpachi's left gave a cheerful grin as he leaned back on his palms. "Okita Souji. I'm a werewolf. The only member of the coven who's not a vampire. If I told you why a werewolf is with vampires, I'd have to kill you."

She winced, her fingers gripping into the covers on her lap as the fear built up inside of her. "U-umâ€¦"

"Relax," the one named Sano said, dismissing his companion casually. "He makes death threats all the time and he never follows up on them."

"Yeah," Shinpachi added. "The only people he kills don't get a warning."

Okita smiled more widely. "Aw, you had to spoil it for the kid, didn't you?"

"Moving on," muttered the last man, the one with purple hair. "I am Saito Hajime. As Souji said, I am a vampire."

She nodded once and, forcing herself to keep one eye on Okita, stammered, "Whatâ€¦ Would you mind explaining the situation to me, please? What is going on, exactly?"

Saito bowed his head slightly, brushing his chin against his over-the-shoulder ponytail. "I was not present for the battle, however, I understand that Nakahara was killed by your hand, correct?"

Giving a slight nod, she mumbled, "Heâ€¦ ran into the swordâ€¦ I didn't mean toâ€¦ Before I knew what was happening, I-"

Sano raised a hand to cut her off. "It's all right, young one. Nakahara was our enemy, a constant pain in our lord's side."

"I'll explain," Saito murmured, voice low. "Vampires are creatures with incredible speed and strength in contrast to humans. We have remarkable healing qualities, as well. However, the trick to our abilities is that we are unable to kill one another. In order to end the life of a vampire, a human must pierce their heart."

Sano nodded his agreement and added, "In order to combat others, a vampire can give their blood to a human to make them an advanced sort of superhuman. They receive strength and speed to rival a vampire, and can sense our presence. We call such humans 'hunters.'"

Saito spoke again, taking the lead as Okita and Shinpachi seemed to watch. "What I imagine happened this evening was that Lord Hijikata was engaged in combat with Nakahara. During the fray, he spied you and decided to make use of your ability to end our opponent."

She blinked, her head swimming with such strange and new knowledge. She prayed it was all a dream. Any moment now, she would wake up and it would be over. Until then, she decided to play along and asked, "Was the other man a hunter, then?"

Shinpachi finally added to the explanation, saying, "Nope! He was a pureblood, a lord of vampires, really. The covens are led by the purebloods, though Nakahara was a total waste in comparison to Lord Hijikata."

"Umâ€¦" she whispered, slowly raising her hand to draw their attention to herself so she could speak. "Lordâ€¦"

Hijiâ€|kata?"

"Mm." Shinpachi nodded. "Our lord and the pureblood heir of the Hijikata clan. The man who just left a minute ago, that was Lord Hijikata Toshizo."

Blinking, she murmured, "Lordâ€| Hijikataâ€| Toshizoâ€|" She wasn't sure what to think anymore. She was still sure she was going to wake up at any moment, so she might as well make the most of her dream. After all, she was surrounded by four very attractive men.

Okita dropped backwards to lie on his back and stare up at the ceiling, saying, "Our coven and that of Nakahara Junbei have been at odds for a while now. Though he can't kill vampires, he's been snatching up random humans and feeding them his blood to make them hunters and sending them after us. Well, I'm not particularly susceptible to hunters, but they are still an inconvenience."

Sano nodded his agreement. "Because you served to kill our longtime rival, Lord Hijikata feels the need to repay you. I don't know what he has in mind for that, but we will do our utmost to make you comfortable in the meantime."

She didn't know what that meant, but the gnawing feeling that this wasn't a dream was getting bigger and bigger. What would happen to her?

â€|

Hijikata walked down the corridor and flicked his wrist slightly, triggering the door before him to slide open without being touched. His powers as a pureblood far exceeded those of impure blood, which made the difference in class easy to observe. Only those of pure vampire blood could wield seemingly magical powers that connected them with the elements.

Similar to witches, who could summon the elements and manipulate them to their wishes, purebloods could channel the power through their own bodies and make themselves one with them. Their magic wasn't as strong as a witch's, but they still had the upper hand in a fight between vampires.

He walked into the room with his long hair falling behind him and a formal suit of western cultures falling down his frame. He'd acquired it almost a decade ago when he'd traveled to Europe for a treaty talk with another coven. He found he preferred the western clothes more than those of traditional Japan, but was still comfortable in his native homeland's attire.

His coven was rather mismatched, with Hajime and Shinpachi choosing to wear western clothes like him while Souji, Sano, and Heisuke wore traditional Japanese attire. Not that it mattered. Japan was adopting the western styles more and more with each passing day, so they still blended into history easily.

He walked into the room with his five coven members and the human girl waiting for him. His coven was small, but extremely loyal. He had the people he needed nearby.

Taking a seat at the head of the room, he looked straight towards the

girl and said, "Until you determine how our debt can be repaid, my coven will protect you in your daily activities. We can't have you dying before we can settle the score."

She seemed to stare at him blankly, as if she didn't understand what he said. She looked and dressed like the Japanese, so he assumed she spoke the language, but he supposed he could have been wrong. No, he clearly remembered her speaking in Japanese the previous day when she'd awoken. Raising an eyebrow, he asked, "Did you not understand me?"

Cringing, she shook her head quickly and offered a bow. "Er, no, that's not it, Lord Hijikata."

He had to admit, the girl knew her manners. "Then speak. What do you desire from us?"

Keeping her eyes down, she stammered, "Please, I didn't do anything. You owe me nothing."

Sighing, he muttered, "Hajime, I thought I told you to explain everything to her?"

The violet-haired man stood beside his chair, but gave a slight bow and replied, "My apologies, OtÅ•san. We did not delve into the details of the battle with Nakahara."

Hijikata turned back to the human girl bowed before him and said, "Nakahara has been trying to eradicate my coven for the better part of this millennium. He stole from me something very precious and had the nerve to misplace it. His interference is something that had become a part of our everyday lives and the fact that it is over is a true turning point in the Hijikata clan's history. This debt we hold to you is not something that we can dismiss with a mere 'I didn't do anything.' We will repay you, in some way, shape, or form."

She slowly lifted her chin to look at him and gasped once, no doubt afraid of his cold appearance. Lowering her gaze again, she quietly murmured, "I seeâ€¦ I understand now."

Nodding once, he said, "Name what you desire. Riches, property, servants, nobilityâ€¦ All of this and more can be yours if you so choose."

She stayed silent for a long moment, then faced him again with a weak smile and closed eyes. Her voice shook slightly as she said, "Thank you, but unless you can return my parents from the grave, then I'm afraid there's nothing I could want."

He closed his eyes as irritation started to set in. Did she think this was some sort of game? Gritting his teeth, he grumbled, "Childish antics serve no place in this hall. There is no way to return the dead, so find another request."

Bowing her head respectfully, she said, "I'm sorry if all I want is something childish. I had no intention of dirtying my hands with murder, so I don't feel there is any debt to be paid. I don't have any use for money or property. After all, I am a woman. Anything you give me will simply be removed when I marry."

He frowned slightly as he took in the sight of the child. So she could display a little maturity. She couldn't be more than eighteen years old, but why was such a young girl wandering the streets in the middle of the night wearing men's clothes? He leaned back in his chair and studied her carefully. "Very well, then. We will remain with you until the day comes that we can assist you. I am certain there is some way we can repay our debt. In the meantime, I assure you that no harm will befall you."

She nodded slowly. "Iâ€¦ I suppose that sounds okay. Thank you."

Giving a slight smile, he murmured, "Then I believe we have a deal."

* * *

><p>There we go! Chapter one! I anticipate roughly twenty chapters. I have my outline done up to chapter seven, I think, but hopefully I can get that done soon. I'm currently in summer school for another week and a half, so I may not have another chapter for a little while. I'll do my best to get one done soon, though! I'll whip up a cover when I have time, too :)<p>

Thank you for stopping by and I hope to see you again in the next chapter!

Please review!

-Valk

End
file.